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ABSTRACT

To help the New Independent States and Mongolia address central issues related to lifelong learning, the European Training Foundation organized a project on lifelong learning that involved the following countries: Armenia; Belarus; Georgia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Mongolia; the Russian Federation; Ukraine; and Uzbekistan. The project's principal component was a seminar on the conceptual aspects of lifelong learning and the current state of its development in the European Union and New Independent States. Each country prepared a national report outlining its current lifelong learning activities and policies. The European Commission contributed a memorandum on lifelong learning that defined lifelong learning as "all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competence" and identified the following priorities for action: (1) value learning; (2) information, guidance, and counseling; (3) investing time and money in learning; (4) bringing together learners and learning opportunities; (5) basic skills; and (6) innovative pedagogy. Two broad recommendations directed toward the New Independent States emerged from the conference. The first was to raise awareness of the importance, components, and principles of lifelong learning. The second was to develop a more systematic approach to establishing lifelong learning policies and the legal framework underpinning them. (A table detailing the basic skills identified in the country reports is appended.) (MN)

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REPORT

The challenges of lifelong learning

Report of a seminar involving the New Independent States and Mongolia, February 2002

European Training Foundation

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European Training Foundation

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The European Training Foundation is an agency of the European Union which works in the field of vocational education and training in Central and Eastern Europe, the New Independent States, Mongolia and the Mediterranean partner countries and territories. The Foundation also provides technical assistance to the European Commission for the Tempus Programme.

The challenges of lifelong learning

Report of a seminar involving the New Independent States and Mongolia

February 2002

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1. Introduction

Based on discussions currently ongoing in many countries, it is probably true to say that a well-developed infrastructure for education and training is one of the most important driving forces behind the development and modernisation of society. Furthermore, the creation of the knowledge society will have a paramount role, not only in the development of the economy but also as a prerequisite for the success of the democratic process and for the prevention of social exclusion.

The opportunity to gain new knowledge must be open to everyone at any time, as it is widely accepted that the accelerating development of modern society calls for a constant renewal of knowledge. This renewal must be a lifelong commitment a commitment to **lifelong learning.**

The concept of lifelong learning is a reality today and will be even more important tomorrow!

The term lifelong learning is the name for a new approach to learning which focuses on individuals' opportunities and abilities to learn during their whole lives and in different situations, both formal and non-formal.

The concept of lifelong learning encompasses the concept of continuing education that was predominant during the sixties and seventies but is, at the same time, an enlargement of that idea. That concept was built on the principle that the formal education system was the sole provider of educational opportunities for the individual. The system was, to a great extent, supply-driven.

The concept of lifelong learning focuses on the individual in the context of the needs of employment and active citizenship. In this sense, lifelong learning is driven by the **demands** of the labour market, rather than the **supply** from the vocational education and training system.

Lifelong learning implies a learning process which takes place inside and outside the formal education system in a variety of new contexts. This means that without the support of a formal education process, the ability of the individual to search for new knowledge and to develop new competencies will be an important basic skill.

The development of the concept of lifelong learning demands new ways of thinking within the education system. These include:

- A structured approach to learning in which young people are encouraged to take an active part in the learning process from pre- or primary school onwards;
- Access to and information about both formal and non-formal education, must be facilitated for all;
- Systems for validation of competence gained outside the formal education system must be introduced.

To discuss these and other central issues related to lifelong learning, the European Training Foundation set up a project for the New Independent States and Mongolia to start and further discussions on the topic of lifelong learning among the participating countries. The specific objectives were to:

- Raise awareness of the concept of lifelong learning among policy makers in the New Independent States and Mongolia;

- Assess the relevance and the progress towards implementing lifelong learning structures in the New Independent States and Mongolia.

The following nine countries participated in the project: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, The Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

The main component of the project was an international seminar where the conceptual aspects of lifelong learning and the present state of its development in the participating countries as well as in the EU member states, were discussed.

Nevertheless, the aim was to go beyond the organisation of a seminar, however useful and interesting that might be, and try to formulate a number of concrete recommendations and suggestions for the development of lifelong learning in the countries involved.

Each country was asked to prepare a national report outlining the current situation on the basis of a background paper giving the conceptual platform and prepared by the EU consultants. The reports were used during the discussion and for the ongoing work.

The objectives of this report are: (a) to present and explain the concept of lifelong learning to experts from the education, training and labour market sectors in the New Independent States and Mongolia, and (b) to explain the current state of play and relevance of this topic in these countries. The report is based on the conclusions from the seminar organised by the European Training Foundation, which took place in Nyköping, Sweden from 3 to 5 February 2002.

1.1 *The national reports*

The issues that the partner countries were asked to address in their national reports were:

- The historical and cultural context for the development of lifelong learning;
- The relevance of lifelong learning in the country;
- The perception of lifelong learning among the main stakeholders, including the social partners;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of lifelong learning, including:
  - examples of "best practice"
  - concrete problems;
- The opportunities and threats facing the successful implementation of lifelong learning that can be expected in the future.

1.2 *The seminar*

In line with the main aim of the project, the objective of the seminar was to discuss the development and the conceptual aspects of lifelong learning and to try and formulate a number of concrete and practical recommendations as to how to develop it in the participating countries.

The exchange of experience and ideas during the seminar with key Swedish speakers and, during a study visit, with lifelong learning stakeholders at regional and local levels, helped the participants as well as the Swedish experts to see the problematic issues in a different light.

The seminar took place in Nyköping, Sweden. The location was chosen because it offers a comprehensive picture of different processes and innovations in a small town where everything is within easy reach. Furthermore, the Nyköping municipality and the regional authorities are fully committed to the development and implementation of lifelong learning, and support many interesting activities.

It is hoped that this publication will further stimulate the discussion and thereby contribute to the development of the concept of lifelong learning, in the participating countries.

2. The conceptual aspects of lifelong learning

In order to facilitate dialogue and to provide the participating countries with a basis for the preparation of the national reports, a background paper outlining the conceptual aspect of lifelong learning was prepared.

2.1 Why do we all need lifelong learning?

In the past …

We left secondary school, vocational training or higher education and entered a job. With luck, we progressed through the company/ organisation until we retired. Most economies were based on industrial production and large bureaucracies. Jobs were 'for life'. Technical and economic development was gradual and evenly paced. Occasionally, we needed some retraining so we attended a training centre, a college or an in-company training course. Some of us acquired higher level qualifications. The world economy was stable and change was quite easy to predict.

Now …

Very few of our children leave secondary school for employment. Most progress to further and higher education, both academic and vocational. We change jobs, occupations and professions frequently. Advanced economies are based on the acquisition and application of knowledge to deliver services and high technology products in smaller, dynamic enterprises. Jobs change constantly, very few are 'for life'. Technical and economic development is rapid and accelerating. Many people require constant retraining in subjects so new that many training institutions cannot keep pace. Many have to acquire higher level qualifications. The world economy is turbulent and change is very difficult to predict.

In the future …

The acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence will be a continuous process of development, from kindergarten to post-retirement, from 'cradle to grave'. Nothing less will be sufficient to keep up with social and economic development. Europe and the rest of the world need competent citizens, employees, entrepreneurs and governments to live, work and compete in the global economy. No person, company or country is exempt. This is a 'knowledge' society.

The name we give to this constant process of knowledge, skill and competence development is lifelong learning.

2.2 *Why is Europe interested?*

Lifelong learning has been adopted by the European Union to help create a European 'knowledge' society, which is world class, competitive, dynamic and inclusive. It may help to describe what is meant by a 'knowledge' society. This is described by the European Commission as:

"*A society whose processes and practices are based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge.*[1]"

The focus, then, is on these 'immaterial' goods and services. These include digital and biotechnologies, travel, transport, information and communication technology, financial and personal services. This is not to say that manufacture, the basis of traditional industrial societies, is no longer important. However, manufacturing is increasingly dependent on competence in digital design, information and communication technology, robotics and computer based control systems rather than on physical, manual skills. Furthermore, all of these 'new' technologies are rapidly changing and require complex knowledge, skills and competence, including personal and interpersonal skills and the responsibility for planning work processes, including quality.

Lifelong learning is a way of looking at the development of people's knowledge, skills and competence throughout the course of their lives. The lifelong learning approach recognises that knowledge and skills can be gained through experience at work and in our social lives, as well as through formal or informal learning.

The EU recognises three 'types' of learning. Formal learning, which is typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective. Informal learning, which is learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or "incidental"/random). Non-formal learning is learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

2.3 *Why is lifelong learning important to the New Independent States and Mongolia?*

The concept of lifelong learning is relevant for the reform processes of all countries in transition. Transition economies need to invest more in human capital, and to raise the level of skills of their populations to meet fundamental changes in the world economy, such as the globalisation of markets, rapid technological development and world-wide competition.

Education systems which were appropriate in the past (characterised as relatively stable and with gradual change) are no longer suitable for the present and the future. We have to think outside our traditional boundaries of initial and continuing education. We have to think outside formal education and training based in institutions. We have to reconsider the idea that initial training is sufficient preparation for a lifetime's work.

1 Communication: *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*, Commission of the European Communities, November 2001

In the New Independent States and Mongolia, lifelong learning offers an opportunity to support the emerging knowledge society, to allow individuals to keep up with new developments in the economy and society, and to develop a real learning culture. This may seem a very long term objective for these countries but preparation needs to start now so that people are prepared for change when it arrives.

Lifelong learning is an important issue on the agenda of the European Union, the OECD and the future member states. With this in mind, the European Training Foundation set up working groups and organised a follow-up seminar on this issue in order to raise awareness among decision-makers in the New Independent States and Mongolia.

2.4 *What precisely is lifelong learning?*

The European Commission document, 'A memorandum on lifelong learning' defines lifelong learning as:

'all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence'.

Following a consultation process, there were concerns that this definition might be too narrow, suggesting that only the employment and labour market dimensions of lifelong learning were important.

The memorandum stated that **active citizenship** and **employability** were *'equally important aims for lifelong learning'*, and also referred to other objectives which can be summarised using the terms **personal fulfilment** and **social inclusion**. This has led to an extended definition of lifelong learning in the Commission communication:

"All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective."

For those of us involved in vocational education and training, the fourth objective is clearly the most significant. That does not mean however, that we can ignore the other social objectives, although they are not our main responsibility. This project will focus on the last two objectives: to promote social inclusion and to develop and maintain employability, as well as to adapt work practices and technologies to meet changes in the economy and society.

The Commission communication also includes six 'priorities for action' to promote lifelong learning. These are listed below and are followed by a short explanation.

2.5 *The six 'priorities for action'*

- **Priority 1: Valuing learning.**

  Objective: to significantly improve the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning;

- **Priority 2: Information, guidance and counselling.**

  Objective: to ensure easy access to good quality information and advice about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout their lives;

- **Priority 3: Investing time and money in learning.**

  Objective: to visibly raise levels of investment in human resources in order to give priority to Europe's most important asset; its people;

- **Priority 4: Bringing together learners and learning opportunities.**

  Objective: to make lifelong learning opportunities as close to learners as possible in their own communities and supported through ICT-based facilities wherever appropriate.

- **Priority 5: Basic skills.**

  Objective: to guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society;

- **Priority 6: Innovative pedagogy.**

  Objective: to develop effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for lifelong learning and lifewide learning. (Lifewide learning is one dimension of lifelong learning as defined in this Communication. It includes all learning activity whether formal, non-formal or informal).

The six 'priorities for action' explained

Priority for action	Commentary
1. Valuing learning	It is important to recognise, promote and value both informal and non-formal learning, as well as the traditional routes of formal learning. This will involve giving proper value and recognition to previously acquired competence (often called accreditation of prior learning). Recognition of learning also depends on the 'transparency' of qualifications (qualifications which are accepted in different regions and countries and which are understandable by all stakeholders, particularly employers).
2. Information, guidance and counselling	Information, guidance and counselling services should be accessible to all citizens (also through ICT based services) and tailored to their needs by developing systems that are relevant, transparent and of high quality. These systems must also be flexible, and adaptable to the changing needs of the individual learner, the labour market and the wider learning community.
3. Investing time and money in learning	Investing includes both time and money. Investing more is obvious, but the real issue is about targeting investment (where to spend resources) and the return on the investment (the 'added value'). The EU has identified these priorities: **Incentives** - providing incentives for individuals and companies through grants and tax incentives; **Target age groups** - for example, children in pre-school education (to reduce inequalities later on and to establish a solid basis and motivation for further learning) and older workers and the elderly (to give them opportunities to participate more actively in society and the labour market including roles as mentors, trainers or learning facilitators) Disadvantaged groups - groups such as women, school dropouts, single mothers, immigrants, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, non-native language speakers. All of whom have difficulty in accessing learning opportunities; **Non formal approaches and environments** - investing in learning 'infrastructure' to support non-formal learning, like libraries, internet access, e-learning, community provision; **Teacher/facilitator training** - to prepare those supporting learning for their new roles.

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Priority for action	Commentary
4. Bringing together learners and learning opportunities	Learning cannot be confined to schools, colleges, universities and training centres, which are often difficult for people to access. Within formal education, creating better access is a priority. This can be done, for example, by offering facilities to encourage non traditional learners, such as crèches, evening and weekend opening etc. Formal education can contribute to links and partnerships to take learning opportunities to citizens, working with local authorities, trade unions, employers and community groups. Open and distance learning also has an important part to play, particularly when combined with ICT methods (e-learning), as these methods do not depend on attending an institution. ICT approaches can provide access to learning from home, the workplace, the local library or community centre. Learning can also be embedded in work activities, so the social partners have an important part to play in creating 'learning organisations'. In developing these initiatives, the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises must be addressed as they usually account for most direct employment and can be the engines of change and innovation.
5. Basic skills	There is no doubt that basic skills are needed by all citizens and employees. However, there has been much debate about which basic skills should be developed. There is overlap with existing concepts such as 'core skills' and 'key skills'. Basic skills may include: **Foundation skills** (foundation writing, reading and mathematics); **Information and communication technology (ICT) skills** (basic ICT skills, ICT communication skills, and 'technological culture'); **Social and (inter)cultural skills** (ability to work in a team, ability to communicate, understanding of cultural diversity and heritage, foreign languages, values such as democracy, gender equality, tolerance, respect for others and the environment); **Personal skills** (motivation and ability to learn, autonomy, empathy, self-respect, problem-solving, risk-taking, creativity, entrepreneurship, empowerment, critical sense, managing change).
6. Innovative pedagogy	Innovation is needed in both the learning **process** and learning **methods**. There needs to be a move away from formal 'knowledge acquisition teaching' to 'competence acquisition learning'. Teachers need to ask 'what do students need to learn' rather then 'what shall I teach'. Learners, as far as possible, should take charge of their own learning to acquire knowledge and develop skills. Project oriented learning and learning organised as 'study circles' are two approaches to teaching and learning which may be particularly useful for 'non-traditional' learners. New learning methods are also supported in particular, ICT supported learning (e-Learning). However, technology does not guarantee educational success, so there is a need for competent teachers, trainers and high quality learning materials to support ICT methods.

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2.6 *A summary - some themes which characterise lifelong learning*

Lifelong learning is:

- About competence: the development of people's knowledge, skills and competence throughout the course of their lives ... to enable us to act in a thinking, reflective way to achieve economic and social goals.
- Open access, 'from cradle to grave': regardless of gender, social status, previous educational attainment, race or religion.
- For all citizens: Individuals, families, local communities, trade unions, employers, non-governmental organisations, regional authorities and the government, all have a part to play, there are no passive actors.
- Both economic and social in orientation: educated people are good citizens and good employees.
- Placing the needs of the learner is at the centre of the learning process: the teacher becomes a coach and facilitator of learning.
- Based on transparent education and training standards: which can be understood by all stakeholders, particularly learners and employers.
- Lifelong learning enhances life opportunities, for life.

Lifelong learning is not:

- Developed 'for' people by educationalists. It is developed 'with' people in partnership, involving all key stakeholders.
- An extension and enhancement of continuing or adult education: formal education institutions have an important but limited role.
- More courses: but where courses are developed they need to be flexible in both design and delivery, using 'modules' which meet the needs of learners, not the institution.
- ICT and e-Learning: these have an important role but they can exclude certain groups and often require considerable support.

3. National Reports with practical examples from the participating countries

3.1 Summary of the national reports

This summary has been prepared from an analysis of the nine country reports[2]. Comments have been summarised across the six 'priorities for action' from the Commission communication[3]. An analysis of the content has been conducted to identify recurring issues, which are further summarised under the sub-heading for each 'priority for action'.

3.1.1 Valuing learning

Examples of reforms: Examples have been chosen which focus on accreditation outside the state system, or comments on the lack of such accreditation.

3.1.2 Information, guidance and counselling

Examples of change: This key message was interpreted in most of the reports as 'management of training and counselling'. Consequently, there are sections on changes in institutional management, which are not relevant to the focus of the project. The national reports also seem to highlight a number of examples of information about learning opportunities or lack of access to it. Most countries have plans to develop and improve systems of vocational guidance and career counselling for both young people and adults. In many cases the preference seems to be for creating separate vocational guidance centres instead of incorporating these services into the work of the training institutions.

3.1.3 Investing time and money in learning

State/government initiatives: The most prominent developments have been initiated by governments. Comments in this sub-section also include examples of reduced state support. This is particularly the case in the Caucasian republics of Georgia and Armenia.

2 Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

3 As the background papers were in the process of being distributed, the latest EU document 'Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality', 21 November 2001, was published. In the new document, the six key messages have been re-arranged and the definition of lifelong learning has changed slightly. It was agreed that the original order of the key messages would be retained in order to save confusion since respondents would not have the latest version of the EU document in Russian. The seminar in Sweden was used as an opportunity to update partner countries on these changes.

Regulation of non-state provision: Training provision is developing in the non-state sector and some governments are putting regulations and quality assurance systems in place.

Development of non-state provision: There are a number of examples of growth in non-state provision. The common trend (with the exception of Belarus) is that non-state training institutions are given increased opportunities to deliver training in different areas. A typical example is the public procurement for labour market training, which has been developed by the national employment services in most of the countries. The main problem, mentioned explicitly by Uzbekistan but present in most of the countries, is the lack of a system for the recognition of certificates and diplomas issued by non-state training institutions.

Employer initiatives: There are also a number of initiatives involving enterprises and employers. Interesting examples are mentioned in the reports of Ukraine and the Russian Federation (see examples in the respective executive summaries).

3.1.4 Bringing together learners and learning opportunities

State initiatives: There are number of state initiatives designed to bring learning closer to the learner.

By far the most common initiatives are developed within open and distance education. All countries already have or are currently developing plans for increasing distance education at different levels (initial and secondary education and training, in-service training, higher education, general adult education).

In Kyrgyzstan, NGOs have gained increased importance for promoting access to training, particularly in rural areas. Kyrgyzstan has also developed methods for using TV and radio channels in order to bring learning closer to home.

Examples of distance learning and computer based learning.
There are several examples mentioned in the reports such as: training of teachers and trainers through distance education (Uzbekistan), development of distance education in the higher education sector in the framework of the international co-operation programme, DELPHI (Russian Federation), and the creation of an information platform, which in future can be used for distance education (Belarus).

Correspondence and evening courses: Many partner countries have a tradition of correspondence and evening courses. These are being further developed to bring learning closer to the learner. This is mainly done through a gradual improvement of the technical level, allowing for regular feedback and contact between teachers and students. Such regular contacts are the main distinguishing feature between traditional correspondence courses and modern distance education.

3.1.5 Basic skills

Historical context: Almost all of the reports note that in the former Soviet system the basic skills of literacy and numeracy were a clear priority and that the literacy and numeracy rates achieved were world class. One report (Kazakhstan) notes that this achievement remains high, with a reported literacy rate of 96.4%. Only in one instance (Uzbekistan) are there continuing problems in this area which arises from the change of the national language from Russian to Uzbek, with the additional challenge of changing the Cyrillic script to the Latin one.

The need for basic skills: There is a consistent support for basic skills development, an acknowledgement that many such skills are lacking, and clear links are made with labour market needs.

Basic skills - identified: Participants were not asked to identify or prioritise basic skills, but many reports mentioned specific skills. In some instances these are repetitions of those identified in the background paper. The skills identified in the reports are summarised in the table in annex 1.

Plans and policies: In some cases there are plans and policies to address the lack of basic skills. The most typical example here is the programme for reforming the personnel training system in Uzbekistan, which contains concrete plans for providing all citizens with computer knowledge. The transformation of the Uzbek language into Latin script has also called for a full-scale programme for new basic skills. In most countries, however, there are no clearly elaborated policies. Discussions are currently ongoing in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan on how new basic skills could be integrated into the general education and training process.

Delivery: There are a number of interesting examples of the delivery of basic skills, and comments on problems in delivery. The main problem, mentioned by a majority of the countries, is the lack of technical infrastructure, in particular in the ICT area. Another problem, also noted by most countries, is the lack of resources for upgrading teachers and trainers. This problem is founded on the notion that many basic skills must be reflected in new pedagogical and methodological approaches, and should not become new, separate subjects.

3.1.6 *Innovative pedagogy*

Examples of Innovations: All but one of the reports contains examples of innovations in training and learning:

Armenia: manuals in the form of pedagogical games have been created, as have materials for problem-based training. Furthermore, the biggest technical park in Caucasus has been created in Yerevan

Belarus: training programmes have been changed, including the introduction of modular approaches. A system of distance education has been developed.

Georgia: Very few innovations can be identified. New educational standards are being introduced in the initial vocational education system. The standards pave the way for a competence-based training methodology, which recognises the real demand of knowledge and skills. The standards presuppose a modular approach and training in cycles.

Kazakhstan: Core skills are delivered in new ways and modular training programmes have been developed.

Kyrgyzstan: Training using modern technologies has been introduced (including computer based training packages, modelling programs, simulation programs, thematic training videos and other technical tools, such as overhead projectors, video recorders, etc.) alongside innovative forms of lesson delivery (discussions, dialogues, role plays, case studies, exercises, work with documents, etc.).

Mongolia: Innovations are yet to come. In particular innovations in delivery are anticipated, for example: open schools, temporary schools, in-home schools, self-learning, travelling teachers, travelling schools, on-line training.

Russian Federation: Much is being done in the framework of international projects. There are many bilateral projects in areas such as ITC- based teaching/learning, new methods of foreign language teaching, productive learning, ecology education, and methods of in-service teacher-training.

Ukraine: Modular training has been developed in the field of adult training. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science have developed and approved instructions for the implementation of a modular training system for the training of the unemployed. The example in the executive summary of the national report of Ukraine describes an interesting new 'learning-by-doing' approach.

Uzbekistan: New approaches in teacher training through distance education are being introduced (see example in the executive summary).

Organisational changes: It is well known that there are significant changes in the organisation of the vocational education and training system in these countries. However, in this section only two reports highlighted changes in organisation as examples of innovation. The Belarus report describes school reforms, new types of institution and integrated education programmes, while the Kyrgyzstan report comments that 'new types of school have been opened'.

The role of teachers and trainers: The examples of changes in the learning process identified in 6.1 above have had an impact on the role of teachers and trainers. Many reports comment on the role of the teacher/trainer and in some, the lack of experience in delivering the new methodologies is cited as a constraint.

Plans and policies: As we have seen in previous sections, there are a number of plans and policies being developed to promote innovation.

Constraints on the development of lifelong learning

Each focus group was asked to comment on constraints which would hinder the development of lifelong learning. We have summarised the comments against broad themes and prioritised them against the number of times they appeared in reports.

Constraint:	Frequency
Lack of resources (including cost of equipment, ICT, low incomes, limited budgets, lack of materials)	6
The lack of skills and knowledge of teachers	6
General lack of understanding and awareness of the concept of lifelong learning	5
Absence of a clear link between education and the labour market, including poor development of social partnership	5
Weaknesses in the state systems of vocational education and training	5
Lack of access to international experience	3

Issues emerging from the reports

1. The lifelong learning concept is not yet well understood, particularly in terms of the critical shift from 'training/teaching' to 'learning' and the meaning of 'non-formal'
2. The state still dominates provision (supply) and the main focus is initial training
3. The involvement of social partners (demand) remains weak
4. There are many good examples in the New Independent States and Mongolia on which to build.

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4. Executive summaries of the national reports

The executive summaries were prepared by the National Observatories of the New Independent States and Mongolia. National Observatories are small units set up by the European Training Foundation with the task of collecting, analysing and disseminating information on vocational education and training and related labour market issues.

4.1 EASTERN EUROPE

4.1.1 Belarus

A modern labour market is being developed in Belarus against the backdrop of a complicated restructuring of the economy, involving the liquidation of non-profitable enterprises and the privatisation of state enterprises. Unemployment is rising in all areas linked to the production of goods, while in the service sector, employment levels are remaining relatively steady thanks to higher employment in specific areas such as housing, healthcare, banking, insurance and management. At the same time, the number of employees in scientific service areas and the arts has fallen sharply. Although the level of official unemployment is low at 1.8%, hidden unemployment is another matter altogether and is far higher. To a large extent, unemployment has a clear structure due to the absence of new basic skills within the labour market. As a consequence of the technical re-equipment of almost all economic branches, workers need retraining, particularly in the building and construction sectors, the processing industry, and in the service sector.

In order to tackle this problem in Belarus, up-to-date initial and general vocational education need to be guaranteed for all young people, while around 60% of the employed adult population need to be taught new qualifications and skills, which are at present not available in the country.

The new basic skills that are required include:

- Knowledge of the legislative basis for professional areas
- Business relations skills
- The ability to analyse personal efficiency
- The ability to analyse the efficiency of small businesses
- Forecasting skills
- The use of modern production equipment
- Quality control skills
- Personnel organisation skills

- Competence in the field of ecology
- Business correspondence skills
- The ability to gather and process technical and commercial information using modern methods
- Computer skills
- Information networking skills

Over the last five years, the development of formal and informal learning has been characterised by innovations in both the organisation of education and training, and the way in which it is carried out.

Correspondence education remains wide- spread. The last couple of years have seen the start of the modernisation of the correspondence education system, which has begun to take the form of a modern distance education system. At the same time, new information technologies are gradually being integrated into the education process. The speed at which education institutions are being equipped with computers however, does not correspond to the demand. The state has committed itself to equipping all education institutions with a computer (including internet access) within two years. This is aimed at speeding up the creation of information resources and a national education information system. The information network "Profnet" (see below) will play an important role in this.

There is a growing understanding that an investment in human resources is an investment in the future of a country. All aspects of society need to take part in this process including the state, enterprises, public bodies and the population as a whole. A serious attempt at overhauling the education system needs to include:

- Significantly increasing the financial resources available
- Strengthening the support offered to education system personnel
- Creating the conditions to take full advantage of the professional and intellectual potential in the country
- Convincing the public as to the importance of education.

So far in Belarus measures do not yet go far enough.

In order to develop lifelong learning in Belarus it is necessary to:

- Elaborate a national concept for lifelong learning, taking into consideration previous experience, cultural traditions, and realistic economic possibilities;
- Create mechanisms for active co-operation between the education system and the labour market;
- Transform professional activities into learning factors;
- Establish links between informal and formal education;
- Develop social partnership;
- Stimulate investment in vocational education and training;
- Create a system for the validation of informal education;
- Create a modern information network and develop distance education;
- Train teachers and trainers to support and encourage informal education.

Example of lifelong learning in practice

The corporate information system 'Profnet' is a platform for the development of lifelong learning in Belarus. The main objective of the 'Profnet' system is to create a unified information area in the field of vocational education, which presents new possibilities for professional improvement both at individual and collective levels. This is done thanks to a modern information programme and technical equipment developed for different kinds of activities (training activities, pedagogic activities, scientific-methodological activities, organisational and management activities, vocational orientation activities, etc.).

The fundamental aims of the Profnet system are:

- To increase the efficiency and quality of all forms of vocational education and training;
- To create possibilities for distance education in the field of vocational education and upgrading;
- To intensify scientific research and methodological elaboration in the labour market and vocational education fields, and to create the conditions for the wide-spread operational implementation of the results in practical vocational education;
- To improve management efficiency for all kinds of activities in the vocational education system, e.g. to create an efficient system for supporting the decision-making and implementation processes at all levels of management of the system;
- To integrate Belarus into the global information network in order to be able to access international information resources and to participate in international work sharing in terms of the creation and development of education technologies.

As a way of gathering information on the vocational education and training system using Web technology, an intranet system which comprises access to the internet is being developed.

The Profnet system is being elaborated and fully supported by the Republican Institute for Vocational Education, and is being used by the staff of training institutions and other vocational education providers. The system has been created in the interests of all employees and students in the vocational education system.

Profnet website: http://ripo.unibel.by

e-mail: master@ripo.unibel.by

4.1.2 *Russian Federation*

The concept of lifelong learning is currently gaining official recognition and popularity among the education community of the Russian Federation. It is described as a goal in the development of the education system in the 'National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation', the government programme for the development of education in Russia, and the latest report 'Education Policy of Russia at the Current Stage'. A slightly modified version of this document is soon to be adopted and will serve as a basis for policy development in education for the first decade of the 21st century. In his annual message to the federal assembly, the Russian president pointed out that 'the pace of development of modern economy, science and information technologies calls for a transition to continuing, lifelong learning'.

At the same time, the term lifelong learning is only just entering the rhetoric of both educators and policy-makers and is often confused with the term continuing education/training. The latter is in current use (in practically all the major legal documents regulating education with the exception of

the ones mentioned above), and emphasizes the continuity of the three levels of education: initial vocational education and training, secondary vocational education and training and professional education.

New forms and formats of education institution have emerged to address the education needs of different sectors of the population. For example, a new model of evening school has been developed. In the past, evening schools were predominantly oriented towards adults, but today enrolment is mainly composed of teenagers. A new model of open school (an integrated multi-profile, multi-level general and vocational education institution with a strong social support function) has been developed and is operating in a few cities. The school is open to those categories of students whose right to education has been undermined in some form or another and offers its students opportunities to design individual learning paths.

Post-compulsory education institutions are becoming multi-level and multi-profile. Colleges, technical lyceums, and regional training centres now offer a wide range of training courses to address local labour market needs, primarily in occupations for small or medium-sized businesses (farmers, accountants, mechanics, owners of small restaurants, shops etc.), as well as in occupations such as private tutors, ICT operators, technology instructors for general schools. These programmes are financed from the federal or regional budgets and by individuals. Students at such institutions can train for two occupations simultaneously, covering the costs of the second course themselves.

Numerous vocational education and training institutions (colleges and vocational lyceums) offer, apart from their main curricula, training for different target groups and for different levels of the education and training system.

Programmes for disabled people have been introduced at regional and municipal levels by social support agencies. Training opportunities for older people are few and far between. One of the most interesting models, the so-called 'people's school', was started in St. Petersburg (by the Academy of Adult Education) for pensioners.

It is noteworthy that new forms of integrated education institution emerge more actively in smaller cities with only one vocational education and training institution in operation, while in larger industrial cities they tend to be more sector-bound.

Sometimes, though, multi-profile vocational education and training institutions offer programmes in as many as 15-20 occupations, which can barely be supported by adequate human and material resources and places quality issues at stake.

Apart from vocational education and training and higher education, the post-compulsory level comprises supplementary education for adults where graduates from secondary vocational education and training and professional education can upgrade their qualifications. (Every specialist is entitled to an upgrading course once every five years with costs covered by the enterprise).

Currently enterprises are becoming more active in providing training to their employees. However in-company training has so far failed to catch the eye of the federal and regional ministries. (In the USSR about 16 million people were trained this way annually). State and new private enterprises lead the way in this area. The share of personnel trained in state enterprises amounts to 26%; at new private enterprises, 24%; at privatised enterprises, 15%; and 18% among self-employed, on average.

In-company training financed by employers is provided annually to about four million employees.

As for training and re-training of the unemployed, this area is the responsibility of employment agencies (accountable to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development) and is financed from the Social Insurance Fund.

In the future more training opportunities will be provided by vocational education and training institutions for employees made redundant and for unemployed workers. In general, vocational education and training institutions are already actively cooperating with employment services and are used as a base for training and re-training the adult population.

Nevertheless, people turn to re-training only when made redundant due to the closure of enterprises, or when their jobs become obsolete. On the whole, adults are not yet psychologically ready to take responsibility for their own training or education. On the other hand, there are not enough opportunities for them to choose from and there is insufficient information as to the type of courses available.

Example of implementation of lifelong learning

An impressive example of a prototype of a lifelong learning model comes from the small city of Gzhel (Moscow Oblast) with its famous ceramics factory. The model was initiated by the director of the ceramics factory and the principal of the arts industrial college who managed to enlist the support of the local administration. As a first step, a cultural research and manufacturing training centre (the Centre) was set up to bring together all educational, industrial and social entities of the region on a voluntary basis: kindergartens, general schools, a college (which has concluded cooperation agreements with five higher education institutions in Moscow), music and arts schools, 12 regional ceramics factories, several regional farms, construction firms, and health care institutions.

The network inspired by educational philosophy and the activities of the Centre, has enabled the integration of the social and industrial sectors, with education turning the latter into a pivot of regional development. Thus education has become the system-building factor of regional advancement. The integration of all regional education institutions into a network has resulted in a coherence and continuity in all regional curricula.

An information database was created to follow the educational progress of every child, student and all adults (professional development) employed at regional enterprises, organisations and offices. Regional enterprises have helped to equip the education institutions (starting from kindergartens) with proper training units and workshops, namely 57 training units, shops and mini-enterprises (in occupations such as ceramics, sewing, wood-processing, mechanics, etc.). The region's leading artists and specialists from various sectors and enterprises are involved as part-time teachers at the education institutions. College teachers work part-time at general schools, and Moscow faculties from the five above-mentioned higher education institutions come to teach at the local college. The Centre maintains close contacts with sector in-service training and research institutions and regional specialists can undergo training or do a postgraduate course there.

Regional enterprises have committed themselves to providing work placements for students and school children, and employment to college graduates. As a result youth unemployment has been eliminated completely.

The new model has helped to encourage links and interaction between education, industry, employment and families. For the past few years, all regional demand for workers has been met by local specialists. The Centre's activities have proved to be profit-making and its financial resources are channeled to meet the priorities of regional educational development and support teachers, children and students from disadvantaged families.

4.1.3 Ukraine

In the national report on lifelong learning, the necessity for this concept as a means to ensuring the needs of employees for self-realisation in a constantly changing labour market has been analysed.

In the 'National Doctrine' on the development of education in Ukraine, a special chapter is dedicated to the question of continuing education and lifelong learning.

'New basic skills', necessary for all, should correspond to the demands of specific workplaces. Investment in human resource development is a prerequisite to the successful realisation of any innovation. A further increase in the volume of investments in human resource development depends first and foremost on the policy of the state.

The implementation of innovative training technologies at training institutions and as part of in-company training courses contributes to the global changes within training and the organisation of production processes.

As examples of this, the report includes a description of the organisation of continuing training at a regional, multi-profile, inter-branch training centre, and of the - 'Novo-Kramatorsky' machine-building factory, a learning organisation, where innovative approaches to the organisation and training of personnel are being implemented.

Overall education policy is drawn up by the cabinet of ministers, and is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science and its regional branches. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is responsible for the co-ordination of vocational education and training in the workplace, and of vocational education and training for adults and the unemployed.

The development and implementation of lifelong learning depends primarily on the collaboration of these ministries.

Example of implementation of lifelong learning

The 'Novo-Kramatorsky' machine-building factory learning organisation (NKMF) has elaborated a programme for the continuing improvement of all personnel development in order to create possibilities for hi-tech and science-oriented production through the enhancement of the intellectual and creative potential of the staff. The idea is that this emphasis on human resources development will satisfy the demands of a quickly changing market, and make it possible to adapt to any innovation process.

As an efficient method for training and development, NKMF uses 'learning by doing' technology, based on the principles of business education, methods of problem-based learning and the automation of the training process. Innovative activities in the field of personnel development are carried out within the framework of the company's innovation policy and strategy, aiming at ensuring the sustainable development of the enterprise.

In order to carry out the planned strategic transformations, the enterprise is developing an internal system for personnel development with a principally new organisational structure, a broadened range of different functions, with modern technical and information technologies and equipment.

4.2 CAUCASUS

4.2.1 Armenia

During this period of the socio-economic development of the economy, the vocational education and training system, like all aspects of Armenian life, is in crisis. The main reasons for this are the following:

- Slow development of production processes;
- Unemployment;
- Meagre state financing;
- The low esteem of vocational education and training;
- Incomplete legislation.

These cannot however, be considered as the only reasons for this situation which are directly linked to the current economic situation.

Under such conditions, the vocational education and training system needs to be brought up to a level corresponding to international production standards and demands. This will include equipping the system with modern technology and further developing vocational education and training within the overall framework of education provision in Armenia.

Within this context of rapid economic change, training provided at Armenian vocational education and training institutions is no longer able to satisfy either individual or labour market requirements. Whether or not it is worthwhile preserving any elements of the previous education system is in question as it lags so far behind. Continuing training in new knowledge, skills and competencies, regardless of where they are obtained (at work, at home, in the street, in a training institution etc.) is essential for every individual.

The concept of lifelong learning goes hand in hand with the process of quick change in the social and economic development of the republic. The introduction of lifelong learning will make it possible for the population to obtain the necessary knowledge, basic skills and competencies required by the labour market and to regularly renew and update them.

Example of implementation of lifelong learning.

The first steps are already being undertaken in the shape of informal education and training. This informal education is offered at small, private handicraft workshops and enterprises. For a number of reasons, the availability of this type of training is widespread in Armenia:

- The profitability of the handicrafts involved;
- Their cultural and historical importance;
- Their prestige;
- The lack of opportunities for acquiring the necessary skills in the formal vocational education and training system.

Nowadays, it is necessary to train in these areas under state guidance and, in view of the experience gained in other countries, to include this training within the concept of lifelong learning. This is because it offers students, in a short period of time, the possibility of acquiring the knowledge and skills to enable them to find a job fast.

4.2.2 *Georgia*

During the Soviet period, there was a specific system of continuing training in all republics and Georgia was no exception to this. This system, aside from formal training, also included courses organised by 'Znanie' society , at houses of culture, through a network of folk universities, at secondary and higher education institutions, through in-company training, etc.

As a result of the social and economic changes during the last decade, a part of the informal education network (for example the folk universities and the courses at the houses of culture) has lost its significance and, since it failed to make necessary changes, has disappeared. As a consequence of the stagnation in the economy and the under-usage of the industrial potential of the country, the training and upgrading employees in the work place has all but stopped.

With the recovery of the economy and the development of civil society different categories of the population are beginning to realise the need for additional education services and the upgrading of training. Analyses of the situation in the formal education sector show that the basic skills taught there are, to a large extent, obsolete. At the same time, analyses of the demands and needs in the informal education sector reveal a severe lack of skills in the fields of information processing and communication technology, social and intercultural contacts, among others. In order to find employment in small and medium-sized enterprises or to become self-employed there is a particular interest in the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Nevertheless, the authors of this document are of the opinion that the lack of fully developed legislation, and the need for further funding in human resource development mean that the requirements of the population are not being met. Innovation in the education and training sector is weak.

The laws on education and initial vocational training set down the requirements for different levels and indicate how competencies should be recognised. These requirements are taken into consideration in the elaboration of new standards for formal education.

4.3 *CENTRAL ASIA AND MONGOLIA*

4.3.1 *Kazakhstan*

The reasons for the development and implementation of the European Training Foundation project on lifelong learning in Kazakhstan are several:

- The efficient development of the market economy and a social welfare system for citizens;
- The carrying out of the long-term priorities of the current reform of the education system;
- The integration of Kazakhstan into the global education system;
- The demands for a competent and universal labour force;
- The need to qualitatively update activities within the informal education sector;
- The opportunity to make use of the experience gained in other countries in the development of human capital and the creation of a society founded on information and knowledge.

The following conditions may assist in the implementation of a lifelong learning concept in Kazakhstan:

- The development in economic growth coupled with social and political stability since the end of the nineties;
- The identification of education as a mid-term priority for the government;
- The general legislative basis setting out the prerequisites for the development of the education system, labour relations and employment;
- The infrastructure of institutions and organisations providing children, young people and adults with formal and informal education;
- The legislative basis for the private education sector and the diversification of education financing;
- The normative and juridical bases for management decentralisation, the increase in the autonomy of education institutions, and social mobility.

The following main factors and circumstances limit the development of lifelong learning in Kazakhstan:

- The 'survival' situation, a result of the crisis and unstable economic development, has made the proper development of material, technical, financial, human, information and other resources at all levels of education impossible;
- The absence of a wider involvement of stakeholders, including NGOs and others in the education reform process hampers the development of productive social partnership, and limits the possibilities of raising the prestige of education;
- The low level of access to modern education services for rural and remote populations has lead to the forced social alienation of a large number of young people and adults;
- Training and retraining possibilities are not sufficiently utilised in improving the social and demographic situation, alleviating poverty and unemployment problems, or developing lifelong learning. There is a need for more targeted programmes, focusing on specific labour market or geographical groups.

The lack of an analytical culture and of experience in extracting key education problems and their political and socio-economic nature, hampers the identification of efficient ways of solving these problems in the long-term.

Example of implementation of projects in the field of lifelong learning

Example 1

Organisation of education in basic entrepreneurial skills for young people in initial and secondary education institutions as a basis for improving the preparedness of young people entering the labour market

Project duration: 2001.

Implementing organisation: The National Observatory of Kazakhstan

The project is financed by the European Training Foundation.

The initial training institute in Almaty was given the task of implementing the project.

The project aimed at training a group of trainers to develop skills in job seeking, job placement and interactive teaching methods to improve the professional skills of initial training students.

The project concentrated mainly on the following aspects:

- Analysis of the situation and the need to develop the job seeking skills of initial vocational education students;
- Elaboration of a structure for job seeking and professional skills, as well as the methodology for developing these skills in the education and training process.

In addition to the training of trainers, a handbook for teachers to be used during lessons in all vocational training disciplines in schools and lyceums was prepared. A multi-faceted approach, taking into consideration the interdependence of vocational education and the needs of the labour market can develop the confidence, readiness and ability of young people to adapt and act in a flexible way in a quickly changing environment.

Example 2

Participation of employers in the financing of training

Target group: young people, single parents and families with many children, ex-convicts, poor citizens

Duration: November 2000 - August 2001

Financing source: The Republican State Enterprise "Temirzjoly"

In the framework of the programme for fighting poverty and unemployment 2000-2002, an active employment policy is being implemented. This policy includes targeted help to poor citizens, creation of new work places, financing of training by enterprises, and retraining the unemployed. During the construction of the 'Aksu-Konechnaya' railway, 73 unemployed people aged between 17 and 40 were trained in different professions: railway station managers, level-crossing operators, track and wagon controllers. Priority for training was given to adult members of unemployed families. The specialists were then employed in accordance with their acquired professions. The experience of this training and retraining in the Pavlodar region was later disseminated to other Kazakh enterprises.

4.3.2 *Kyrgyzstan*

The Kyrgyz law on education (1192B, amended in 1997), defines state policy in this area. In accordance with this law, the education system should train citizens for personal, public and material requirements. Today's education policy is built on a combination of the traditions of the Soviet school system and new innovations.

One of the state's strategic objectives is to guarantee general access to education regardless of age, sex, or nationality and to ensure support for the poor.

A number of different education programmes are currently being implemented in Kyrgyzstan. Overall, they need to ensure quality of life, personal health and the multi-faceted development of the individual. In order to guarantee access to education, systems for additional training and adult training, including informal training are being developed. New types of school are being created, education programmes are being diversified and their content is being renewed.

Nevertheless, access to training in the workplace is limited, despite changes in enterprise staff structures and despite the demands on the employees of (new) qualifications.

Lifelong learning programmes require new educatic n strategies, founded on innovations in organisational structures, methodology, training types etc. which take into consideration the characteristics of trainees, particularly those going back into training. Citizens definitely need consultation services and support in selecting training programmes and plans. Training should be characterised by:

- High levels of motivation
- Many objective-based activities
- High awareness of student activities
- Independent study
- Flexibility
- Personal satisfaction
- Flexibility in financing

Although the financing of education has been made a priority in state policy, in real terms it has actually been reduced. The state must now work on the legislative basis for education in order to improve the mechanisms for the financing and management of the system.

Strategic priorities and main issues in education policy are determined by the president, the 'Jogorku Kenesh' (the parliament) and government organisations, which manage and co-ordinate different activities.

A decentralisation of education management has been started, and part of the responsibility is being transferred to regional and training institution level. Public advisory forums and boards are being created by the training institutions.

Research has shown that the participation of employers in training in general, including training of the employers' own employees is low. There is a need to work out a policy in this field and act upon it.

In Kyrgyzstan the literacy level of the adult population is relatively high (96.4%), there are 80,500 illiterates in a population of 4.8 million (1 January 1999). Almost two thirds of the adult population have at least graduated from secondary school. However, together with the high literacy level, a fall in the level of functional literacy and adaptability to change has been noted.

Modern conditions demand a transition of education from a reproductive to a productive system. A lot of effort is being undertaken to implement a trainee-oriented approach to education.

With regard to the growth of the number and type of training institution, with the diversification of programmes, training duration and methods, the issues of appraising and elaborating standards with the direct involvement of employers, are being raised. The standards should incorporate basic skills and ensure transparency between the level of skills obtained and the qualification achieved. The methodology for validation, primarily skills, still needs to be worked out.

With an increase in labour migration the question of the recognition of qualifications acquired in other countries has been raised. At higher education level work is ongoing on the implementation of accreditation systems, including setting out criteria for evaluating higher education institutions and the training offered by them.

Example of implementation of lifelong learning

The individualisation of training has led to the implementation of a modular training system. In the framework of a World Bank project, nine pilot centres for initial vocational training have been established in the following fields:

- Agriculture
- Automechanics
- Hotel and tourism
- Electricity and electronics
- Printing
- Building and construction

The centres are all oriented towards implementing and disseminating international experience in the field of adult vocational education and training using modern equipment and new education technology. The work on creating a modular system has only just begun. Tasks which still need to be carried out include the development of modules and their content, the preparation of training materials and the development of the technical means for training in different sectors and for different professions. A specific problem is also how to integrate basic skills in to the modular training system.

4.3.3 *Mongolia*

From the beginning of the nineties many socio-economic and political changes took place alongside the reform of the education system. For a country witnessing a transitional period in every sector of the economy and society, the new concept of lifelong learning is becoming an important element of the reform process. In order to keep up with the development of the global community and the world economy, Mongolia needs to make a serious effort to raise the competitiveness of its human resources. Although the concept of lifelong learning sounds quite new, it is consistent with the policy of the government, which has been to provide "continuing education" and "education for all". In addition, according to the constitution, the law on education and the government directive on reform in education between 1997-2005, the 'main objective of education is to create an environment for obtaining knowledge, education, and culture, which are oriented to facilitate the individual's self development and life'.

The education system adopted during the centralised and planned economy period had some positive sides, but it is not in a position to respond adequately to the current needs of the labour market. The need and desire for individuals to continue their education is growing due to the demands and challenges of a competitive economy and a knowledge-based society.

The actual changes in the education system underline this fact. In response to the needs of people, and the requirement to cope with the dynamic development of society, the number of higher education institutions, and other educational bodies has increased to more than 170.

Today, the primary obstacle in the education system is the imbalance between vocational and higher education. Over the past 10 years about 11,000 students have been enrolled in vocational schools, while the figure for higher education institutions is almost 78,000. Thus, the country is faced with the challenge of reforming the vocational education and training system and re-shaping the level of acceptance and understanding between formal education and training-based institutions.

One way to resolve these issues is the lifelong learning concept. In this regard, it will be necessary to develop new forms of education institution, which integrate different levels of education and curricula, designed to meet the specific needs of the labour market and individual interests.

The system of non-formal education is at the beginning of its development. However, at the same time there is an evident lack of support for education for disadvantaged groups (single mothers, asylum seekers), specific age groups (older workers and the elderly). Currently, there are no institutions or educational bodies responsible for serving these groups of the population, nor are there any comprehensive policies for solving these problems.

Moreover, there is a lack of statistical data, showing the rate of adult education, training, re-training, apprenticeship etc.

4.3.4 *Uzbekistan*

In general a solid basis has been created in Uzbekistan for the development and practical realisation of the concept of lifelong learning. In the republic a programme for reforming the training system is being implemented at present. The importance of education is recognised and understood at the highest state levels. New types of education institution are being created (vocational colleges and academic lyceums), and new standards and education programmes are being elaborated. All these big-scale reforms have been launched as a necessity. With independence and the emergence of a new socio-economic situation, the demand for traditional basic skills has changed while the need for totally new skills has arisen.

Practically the entire population has been forced to learn how to read and write the new state language, to use computer technologies, to learn how to adapt to new economic conditions, and to develop entrepreneurial skills. Of particular importance is the acquisition of skills of a social and personal nature. Many of these new skills need regular updating, and this in turn calls for the creation of a well-developed network of not only official but also unofficial training institutions, as well as state support for the development of informal learning.

At present in Uzbekistan, education and training certificates and diplomas, recognised by everybody, can only be issued by state training institutions with the formal right to carry out educational activities. Different non-state training institutions and private schools carry out training in some professions and specialities, but their certificates are not generally recognised. In the long-term there is a need to secure equality before the law between all forms of training, as well as the right to receive training at any age. In order to achieve this a number of state measures aimed at raising interest in the continuation of personal training are necessary. One such measure could be a system for grants and credits for education. This year for the first time a system for offering credits in the field of higher education has been introduced in Uzbekistan. In the future it will be necessary to further develop this interesting area to offer credits for education not only to young people but also to adults.

Of special importance under the new conditions are progressive training methods and possibilities to receive training closer to home, since this will shorten training duration and increase its efficiency. One of the promising areas in this field is distance education. Much is currently being done in order to develop this form of education (see example below).

Lifelong learning must be accompanied by professional counselling regarding the choice of different possibilities for training and job placement. In Uzbekistan at present this task is partly covered by the centre for vocational orientation and psycho- pedagogical diagnostics. The activities of the centre

are however, mainly aimed at students and pupils. In future it will be necessary to create similar structures for workers and adults.

Example of implementation of lifelong learning

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is currently carrying out a project with a planned component called 'Training of teachers through distance education'. This issue is at present particularly important for Uzbekistan. The large-scale creation of new types of training institution and the additional three-year compulsory education in college and lyceums after nine school years call for a huge increase in the number of teachers and trainers. It is necessary to train new teachers and to upgrade the education and professional levels of the existing ones. By the year 2010 it is expected that the number of teachers and trainers in specialised secondary vocational education will reach 167,000. At present, 8,000 teachers and trainers are trained per year. At this speed teacher training alone will take 20 years. Moreover, the trainers and teachers also need constant upgrading of their qualifications. In these circumstances distance education may become an efficient means for addressing this massive training need. The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers, No 400 of 4. October 2001 underlines the specific role of distance education in the retraining and upgrading of teachers in the framework of the national programme for human resource development. The Cabinet of Ministers also announced a new policy to support a broad dissemination and access to information and communication technology in a number of different areas, including education (Decree of 23 May 2001).

The ADB project foresees the development of distance education for training teachers as an alternative to existing short-term courses. The training will make use of the already existing infrastructure, since there are only limited financial means for new techniques. In each region, a centre for distance education for teachers will be created on the basis of existing training institutions, which already have access to the internet. During the project, 154 people will be trained in specific distance education methodology. Training material will be taken from international sources and adapted to Uzbek conditions. The material will later be published as a resource, which will be used on a permanent basis. Training modules for different subjects and for innovation in the field of training will be elaborated. As a result of the project 5,530 teachers will have their qualifications upgraded. In a next step, the system of training teachers through distance education will be disseminated widely and will be implemented in all colleges and lyceums on a permanent basis. When determining the training evaluation criteria, internationally recognised quality standards taken from examples of best practice in distance education will be used. Later on this will be integrated into the system of distance education.

The system will be elaborated during 2002-2003 and will be implemented on a permanent basis from 2004.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusion that can be drawn from the presentations and discussions is that most of the participating countries still live in a 'vacuum' following the dismantling of the previous, relatively well-functioning structure for vocational education and training.

The paramount problem is that the financing of the entire education system and further investments cannot be met by the state budget, but is a responsibility that must be shared with the social partners and, employers in particular.

In some countries interesting initiatives for the closer involvement of the social partners in training have been undertaken, including the development of apprentice training.

It was the general opinion of the participants at the seminar that the term 'new basic skills' needs further clarification. The quickest change might be to teach students the practical applications of 'old basic skills' rather than starting to think about the new.

From the presentations it was clear that there is a need for a change in the roles of teachers and students. Students must be encouraged and enabled to take a greater responsibility for learning and to actively search for new knowledge and this needs to start in primary education. The teacher should be seen as the facilitator of this process rather than the lecturer. This will influence teacher training.

The demand for a more flexible education system was mentioned by some countries in relation to the introduction and/or further development of a modular approach to curriculum development.

Valuing learning was only briefly mentioned. One reason for this might be that, in most (not to say all) the participating countries, only the formal certification system is considered valid. Certificates for informal training are only valid in the informal sector.

Distance education was mentioned and some interesting examples were presented. However the lack of resources is still seen as a major problem for the broader introduction of distance education.

A number of recommendations for policymakers working in the field of vocational education and training and the labour market in the New Independent States and Mongolia can be drawn from the seminar.

First of all, the concept of lifelong learning is useful because it groups together, in a strategic way, those initiatives which are already implemented or planned in partner countries. For example, the 'Profnet' information system in Belarus and the core skills projects developed in Kazakhstan were not overtly designed to support lifelong learning. Rather, they were developed and promoted to deal with specific problems in the vocational training reform process.

When placed within a framework of lifelong learning, such projects can be seen to be clearly related to the purpose and outcomes of lifelong learning. However, more importantly, the framework of lifelong learning can show the links and synergy between different projects and initiatives and can also show where there are 'gaps' in policy, institutional development, learning processes and resources.

For example, when mapped against the six 'priorities for action', the Kazakhstan initiative is clearly an example of basic skills development, and it is also an innovation in the learning process. However, it is also evident that because the initiative is based on the school system of initial vocational education, it is not available to adult learners who do not have access to full time education. Yet the method (to develop skills through work related activities) is potentially adaptable to in-company training and continuing education. It is the lifelong learning perspective, which makes this extrapolation possible.

What arises from this observation are two broad recommendations:

1) There is a general need in all New Independent States to raise the awareness of lifelong learning and for each country to increase the understanding of it, the reasons for its importance and its main components and consequences, among a larger proportion of the population. Recognition of the need for lifelong learning implies new rights and opportunities, but also, to some extent, new obligations for all citizens in a country. Consequently it is important to disseminate information about lifelong learning (What is it? What are the opportunities? What are the costs? What are the benefits for the individual and for society? etc.), and to open a broad discussion with as many stakeholders as possible. There are different ways of doing this, for instance:
   - Planning and implementing meetings, workshops and seminars to encourage exchange of information
   - Spreading the information through different channels, e.g. newspapers, television, websites, etc.
2) The lifelong learning concept is included in many countries' national policies, but the actions to promote lifelong learning are autonomous and not coherently related to overall policy. A more systematic approach is therefore required. A general trend in the New Independent States is to put great emphasis on the development of a legal framework before undertaking any actions to promote a new concept such as lifelong learning. Whilst a legal framework is clearly important, at the same time a number of issues within the lifelong learning approach - such as developing local partnerships and non-formal education - cannot and should not be totally dependent on a legal structure. Further development of the national policy for lifelong learning in each of the New Independent States is therefore necessary in order to create an overall approach, including a legal framework, for the development of lifelong learning.

The development of a national policy would allow lifelong learning issues to be embedded in all future projects and initiatives by mapping the project processes and outcomes against the six 'priorities for action' to see whether the results, with modification, could be usefully adapted to meet additional lifelong learning imperatives.

Another method for 'mapping' the outcomes of national initiatives and projects is suggested by the table on the following page in which the 'outcomes' and 'focus' of lifelong learning are separated against the issues of policy development, institutional development, processes and resources.

The National Observatories could support the process of developing a national policy by raising the awareness of lifelong learning and promoting actions to support lifelong learning by disseminating information and examples of practice on a website.

	Outcomes	Focus
	Competence in employment and social and personal development	**What all citizens and learners need ...**
Policy	■ Appropriate legislation ■ Training standards ■ A clear and coherent strategy for young and adult learners ■ Setting clear priorities	■ Open access ■ Non-discriminatory ■ 'From cradle to grave'
Institutions	■ Clearer links to the labour market ■ Using training standards to structure curricula ■ Developing new types of school ■ Encouraging private sector provision ■ Encouraging learning within employment ■ Taking learning to the learner	■ Learning free of the constraints of time and location ■ Learning methods suitable for all age groups
Processes	■ Linking learning to employment needs ■ Using active processes of learning ■ Developing assessment and certification outside the formal school system	■ Active learners ■ Access to assessment and certification
Resources	■ Encouraging/enabling employer contributions ■ Targeting and eliminating waste; making the best use of existing resources	■ Motivation to invest in own learning

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Annex 1: Basic skills identified in the country reports

	Information and Communication Technology	Social and (inter)cultural skills	Personal skills	Other specific skills and abilities
Armenia	■ information processing and communication technology (ICT) ■ fundamental ICT skills	■ skills in team-working ■ skills in foreign languages	■ capability to take risks ■ adaptation skills ■ entrepreneurial skills ■ motivation and skills in how to learn ■ risk-taking skills	
Belarus	■ skills in gathering and processing technical and commercial information with the use of modern techniques, in particular computers ■ how to work in information networks	■ competency in the field of ecology ■ the most important basic skills have turned out to be language knowledge, in particular knowledge in technical English	■ entrepreneurship ■ skills in how to analyse the efficiency of one's own activities and the efficiency of small enterprises	■ knowledge and skills in the legislative basis for any professional activities ■ methods for business relations ■ skills in how to use modern production equipment and how to carry out quality control ■ efficient personnel organisation ■ skills in business correspondence
Georgia	■ information processing and communication technology		■ social and intercultural skills ■ entrepreneurial behaviour	
Kazakhstan			■ to realise their individuality	■ to consciously choose profession and to be demanded on the labour market ■ develop "new basic skills", necessary for life under market conditions

	Information and Communication Technology	Social and (inter)cultural skills	Personal skills	Other specific skills and abilities
Kyrgyzstan		■ general culture and the intellect of the individual ■ Social and (inter)cultural skills ■ to develop mature citizens with respect for society's values ■ working with customers and clients ■ communication skills ■ language skills ■ reading, writing	■ entrepreneurship ■ ability to adapt to changes ■ critical thinking ■ self-management ■ ability to take initiatives ■ problem-solving skills	■ administrative skills ■ quality management skills
Mongolia	■ ICT skills ■ 'acceptance of technological culture'	■ understanding cultural diversity and heritage ■ values such as democracy ■ respect for others and the environment	■ motivation ■ ability to learn, (for all ages of population) ■ autonomy ■ empathy ■ self-respect ■ entrepreneurship ■ managing change ■ creativity	
Russia	■ ICT skills	■ effective communication ■ foreign language and tolerance ■ understand and accept cultural diversity and heritage ■ respect gender equality ■ foster democracy ■ respect for others ■ environment and autonomy	■ responsible decision-making ■ making choices (personal skills)	

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	Information and Communication Technology	Social and (inter)cultural skills	Personal skills	Other specific skills and abilities
Ukraine	■ The worker should be flexible and able to adapt to new technologies		■ creative thinking ■ the be able to create something new ■ to be able to see, feel and rationally solve problems ■ motivation for work ■ The worker should be flexible and able to adapt to new technologies	
Uzbekistan	■ use new information technologies ■ ability to adapt to new techniques	■ Uzbek language in Latin script ■ master foreign languages ■ interaction skills ■ team work skills ■ leadership skills ■ teamwork skills	■ entrepreneurial skills ■ to adapt to different changes ■ ability to take initiatives ■ righteousness ■ adaptation skills ■ responsibility ■ urge for self-learning and self-development ■ ability to plan activities ■ information search skills	■ management skills ■ ability to value one's own work and work of others ■ ability to support and help ■ economic knowledge

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